

Dragon Newsletter

February 28, 2006 Edition

Happy Valentine's Day!



Dear Dragon Families and Friends,

As we enter the second quarter of the deployment, the team is really starting to gain momentum. Pilots know the area almost as well as they do Ft. Hood, the cooks know the menu by heart, the vehicle mechanics can pull a service on a truck with one hand tied behind their back, the crew chiefs can dismantle the aircraft and put it back together again during their lunch break, and the "TOC-rats" (Soldiers in the Tactical Operations Center) will wake from a sound sleep if you so much as whisper the Dragon call sign.

Soldiers have personalized their living quarters to the best of their abilities, thanks to a lot of packages from home. The stream of AAFES bag-laden Soldiers returning from the PX has slowed down. Soldiers now have all of the TVs, DVD players, radios, ironing boards, and Swif-fers® that they might want or need. The spark-chasers have all put up their satellite dishes and hooked up the internet. Some of us rely on good old Armed Forces Network (AFN) which has several channels, to include a movie channel, a military channel, a sports channel and a news channel.

The Longbow Crew trainer is up and running. It is the simulator that our pilots use to hone their skills even when they aren't in the aircraft. It is contained in two semi-trailers and we brought it with us from Fort Hood. Even our non-aviators have taken advantage of the opportunity to get some "flight time". Captain Ritch has more time than Major Sweeney at this point in the rotation.

Environmental Morale Leave (EML), commonly referred to as mid-tour leave, is alive and working. It is good to see Soldiers return rested and keeping us abreast of life back home. Those that haven't gone yet are getting anxious to see their family and friends. Remember that each Soldier will be flown at government expense to the location they chose; they do not have to go to Fort Hood. However, if the Soldier has a need or desire to go

to Fort Hood, but then travels to another destination while on leave, they incur the cost of that portion of their travel and they must get back to Fort Hood prior to their return.

We continue to receive new Soldiers and they are a welcomed addition to the unit. Each new Soldier is an integral part of our team, and we couldn't accomplish our mission without them.

The Company Commanders are adding the names to the FRG rosters and we will forward that back at the first of the month.

Congratulations to CPT Byron Needum who was selected for promotion to Major. That's a huge milestone in his career and it's well-deserved. In addition, 1LTs Dunn, Fry, Perrone, Seiver, and Speegle were selected for promotion to Captain. In another professional milestone, CPT Landrith, CPT Salvo, CPT Teitge, CW3 Jones, CW2 Muckleroy, and CW2 Stidom achieved Pilot-in-Command. That is a huge responsibility and requires great talent and skill. It is kind of like getting your driver's license after having a learner's permit. You no longer have to have an adult with you in the car to drive. Seriously, I am very proud of all of them for their achievements.

We all continue to be motivated and touched by the kindness and generosity of families, friends, and in many cases folks that we haven't even met. Special thanks this month goes out to the Kennett Family Practice in Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, and to the Washington Elementary School, Miss Willie Munoz' 6th Grade Class out of Phoenix, Arizona.

Both of these organizations adopted Soldiers in our unit and generously sent cards and treats. You are great Americans, and everyone's support is extremely important to the morale of the Soldiers. We couldn't be prouder to serve our great nation and all of you. Keep us in your thoughts and prayers, and know that you're in ours!

Lieutenant Colonel Mike Rapavi
Dragon 06



General Richard Cody and HHC Soldier CPL Kyle Wilson pose for a photo during a brigade reenlistment ceremony in February 2006.



Alpha Company "Vipers"

To the friends and family of the Vipers, Happy Valentine's Day!! It is hard to believe that it is already February. Time does seem to go by a lot faster when you are busy, and without a doubt, Alpha Company has been very busy! Most everyone is tired at the end of the day (or night).

For the past month mudding has been the name of the game. Mud has been everywhere--on the roads, the TOC, Dining Facility, latrine, aircraft, gym and everywhere in between. And as soon as it appears to be drying up, mother nature ensures that there is just enough rain to bring the mud back!

January brought many good things to the company. First and foremost congratulations to SSG Marcus Thompson and his wife Jessica for becoming parents. Mark Lee Thompson was born on 28 January and is a welcome addition to the Viper Family.

In addition to that, Private First Class Eben Gonzales was promoted to Specialist and Specialist Brandon Bender was promoted to Corporal and joined the ranks of the Non-Commissioned Officer's

Corps. Both promotions were well-deserved and serve as a testament to the high quality of Soldiers we have in the company.

Other good news included the initiation of leave for Soldiers. Specialist Zachariah Peters and Specialist Gregory Gollnick were able to spend some of January back home and are now making all the rest of us very jealous with their stories. Everyone in the company will have an opportunity to take leave in the upcoming months and most of us cannot wait.

Last month also proved to be bittersweet as well. It was bitter for two reasons. The first was the tragic loss of two more outstanding aviators, officers, and friends. CW3 Rex Kenyon and CW2 Ruel Garcia, both members of B Company, were killed in action on 16 January. The loss was especially hard coming so soon after losing CW4 Salter and CW2 Santos. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their families.



SPC Bender, PV2 Garlick, SPC Martinez at work on the flightline.

rier was asked to take on the same position in B Company to cover the loss of CW3 Kenyon. A big hole was left in B Company and there is not a better person to fill it.

January also proved to be sweet because we were able to welcome a familiar face back to the company. CW3 Troy Snook came in to serve as the Company Standardization Pilot. CW3 Snook served with the Dragons previously and came to us from 1st Brigade. We welcome him and his family to the Vipers!

Well, that is all from this side of the world for this month. All of us over here are keeping all of you over there in our thoughts and prayers. Until next time.....

CPT Timothy Measner

Another reason January was bitter was that we had to bid farewell to our Standardization Pilot CW3 Kyle Perrier. CW3 Per-



CW2 Jason Sharpe and 1LT Jesse Dunn next to an Apache.

Bravo Company "Raptors"



Raptor Family,

This will be my final newsletter as the Commander of Bravo Company. Let me first take a moment to thank each and every one of you for the sacrifices you have made over the last few months. The strength and the support you have shown your Soldiers has made an incredible difference and it has allowed us to conduct our mission here in Iraq with precision, strength and honor.

Allow me to recap some of the accomplishments of your loved ones. First, our maintainers are quite simply, the best in the battalion. What we do here on a daily basis is quite remarkable. When an aircraft lands, our maintainers have often less than three hours to conduct necessary services, assist in its preflight and launch the aircraft again. Your Raptors have adopted a pit-stop mentality. I remember one night, pulling into a reveted parking spot and shutting the aircraft down. Before I was able to climb out of the cockpit, maintenance stands were in place and a work intensive 50-hour inspection was well underway. This is aircraft maintenance at its finest. Cold hard fact; Bravo Company aircraft has out flown both other line companies each month that we have been here, picking up in excess of 40% of the total battalion workload.

Last month, as all of you know, was marred by tragedy. CW3 Rex Kenyon and CW2 Ruel Garcia were shot down while conducting a reconnaissance mission north of Camp Taji. The events that directly followed that shoot down stand in testament to the courage and professionalism of your aviators. Within

thirty minutes of the events, aircrews were preflighting their aircraft and asking for early takeoff times to provide security at the scene. When they did launch, they were sent to conduct their standard mission and they did so without hesitation. Our Soldiers have met our enemy on the field of battle on numerous occasions and you can take great pride in their actions.

Strength is derived from a strong center or core. For a football team it is a strong line protecting the quarterback, for people it is a strong moral foundation on which to base decisions, and in a combat unit it is simply, a strong family and support system. Your actions have been fantastic and I am proud of each of you. After the 16th of January, you demonstrated to the chain of command your true character, and I could not be prouder. I would like to recognize a few individuals who stood out this month. SPC Gosvener, our youngest Soldier, earned a well deserved promotion and SPC Bennett and SPC Henning reenlisted, further committing themselves to a cause large than themselves.

Lastly, as I will not have the opportunity to publicly do so at a formal change of command ceremony, I would like to thank my wife, Melissa, who has been my core and my strength throughout my time as a Commander. She has stood by me through the best and the worst of times and I can say to each of you, her love and pride for each of you and your Soldiers runs just as deep as mine.

God bless you all.

-Captain Jeffrey M. Papaleo "Raptor 06"-



SGT Trammell and CPT Papaleo promoting Private First Class Gosvener to the rank of Specialist.



CPT Papaleo with SPC Henning at Henning's reenlistment ceremony.



Charlie Company "Sidewinders"

Well, it is again time for the Sidewinder newsletter. This past month has had its share of ups and downs for us. We were deeply saddened by the loss of Chief Warrant Officer Three Rex Kenyon and Chief Warrant Officer Two Ruel Garcia. Theirs is tragic loss and their absence is felt by all. With heavy hearts we continue the mission and carry on with the work that they loved.

This month we have some new additions. CPT Welch recently picked us up a new helicopter from the 3rd Infantry Division, and by "new" I mean new to us. It's about as "battle hardened" as they come. That has meant even more work for our crew chiefs and they have certainly been up to the challenge. After about a week of intense maintenance, all their hard work paid off. The aircraft is now ready for battle and is a welcome addition to the flight line.

In addition to a new aircraft, we've got two new faces on the Sidewinder team. We are pleased to announce that CW3 Mike Niemi and CW2 Brian Riddle are coming to us from Bravo Company. In addition to two new aviators, we have to welcome back 1SG Hampton and SPC Jernigan, who have just come back to us from leave. While both say that their

leave was too short, they're both refreshed and ready to get back into the swing of things.

With the arrival of our two new aviators, comes the loss of another. CW2 Coleman is leaving the Sidewinders and will be joining the Bravo Company team. CW2

Coleman has been a valuable member of our team here, holding almost every position in this company. His work ethic and presence will be missed. We all hope that he finds a happy home with the Raptors.

Mark A. Greene
Sidewinder 06



CPL Serna, SPC Castro, and SPC Jernigan in the C Company office.



A company First Sergeant wears "many hats," especially 1SG Hampton.



Delta Company "Dawgs"

It is hard to believe that three months have passed since we marched away from our loved ones at the battalion headquarters. We have experienced a lot of success in the first 90 days of this journey. Your Soldiers are performing just like you would expect; dedicated, focused and motivated. I am humbled daily to have this job and be leading such wonderful men and women.

We are now sending Soldiers on leave and pass, and beginning to improve our areas here at Taji. Your Soldier will receive 15 days of leave during the next seven months where they can return home to relax and recharge for the remainder of the deployment. Some Soldiers are receiving passes that allow them to relax in a nearby location for a period of four days. The Soldiers who have taken advantage of this opportunity really enjoyed their time. All of us are looking forward to leave, pass or a combination of the two.

We can see that Soldiers are settling into their routines as they move about to take advantage of the facilities here on Taji. The gym is probably the most popular facility on the post beside the dining facility. Of course, some believe that you should go to the gym so you can eat more of the good food! Our battalion enjoys the benefit of having our own gym, so that further supports our efforts to stay in shape. With the schedule we are keeping here, sometimes it is difficult to find time for yourself.

Soldiers enjoy the gym, but also take advantage of the MWR theater and internet cafes. Our rooms have AFN access for free, so we can typically receive news, sports and some popular television shows. Movies are constantly passed around between the Soldiers, which is another advantage of our accommodations.

I frequently receive inquiries concerning items that we might want to receive to



D Company Soldier PV2 Felicia Daily (at right) at the brigade's Combat Patch ceremony on February 15th (LTC Rapavi and CSM Morant pictured at left.) PV2 Daily has the distinction of being the youngest Soldier in the Combat Aviation Brigade.

make our lives easier. I know there are requests from church groups, civic organizations and individuals alike concerning what to send. The dining facility and

PX are fairly robust, so small items such as homemade cookies, coffee or phone cards are appreciated.



Delta Company "Dawgs" (cont'd)

This month we said goodbye to both of our Platoon Leaders, 1LT Bennett and 1LT Sidwell. 1LT Bennett is now in 2-4 Aviation Regiment, where he is trying to work his way into one of those Black-hawks. 1LT Sidwell has moved to HHC, 1-4. She currently serves as the battalion S1 and will hopefully move to a Black-hawk platoon leader position in the near future. I thank you both for your service in D Company and wish you the best in the future.

Congratulations go out to SPC Schmitz and SPC Rodriguez, Richard A. on their re-enlistment this month. I had the privilege of re-enlisting both of these great Soldiers and I am pleased that they decided to remain a part of the team. Every time I re-enlist one of our Soldiers I remind them of my appreciation for their service to our Nation. Your Soldiers are re-enlisting in an organization that recognizes their sacrifice and appreciates their continued service.

Lastly, I would like to thank you all once again for your untiring support. I frequently tell our Soldiers that we have the best Soldiers the Army has to offer. Along with these great Soldiers come the

Army's best families. Having a strong support system is important to these Soldiers and we all appreciate your support as well as the hardships you endure. Stay safe and stay in touch!

CPT Corey M. James
DAWG 06



Above: CW4 Smith takes a moment to relax in the D Co hangar.

Below: PFC Palma orders parts on the computer to keep aircraft flying.



Orderly room clerk SPC Walker works hard to manage personnel issues for the largest company in the battalion.



Echo Company "Rough Riders"

Greetings from Roughrider 6!

Hello from Camp Taji, Iraq. Well into our third month, the Roughriders of Echo Company, 1-4 Aviation Regiment (Attack Recon Battalion) have been accomplishing their daily tasks as well as receiving promotions, re-enlistments, and preparing for their future with many correspondence college courses.

Promotions to the rank of Private First Class include:

PFC Fowler, Samantha
PFC Caldwell, Alex



Promotions to the rank of Specialist include:

SPC Hannaman, Jonathan
SPC Simmons, Drew
SPC Guinyard, Joseph



Promotions into the ranks of the NCO Corps as Sergeant include:

SGT Mayle, Donald
SGT Jones, Terrell



Reenlistments since the last news letter include:

SGT Bozenske
SGT McKittrick

SPC Beck and SPC Ambelas make another trip in a UH-60 Blackhawk to visit the E Company Soldiers stationed at Baghdad International Airport.



Maintenance platoon keeps the battalion's equipment running. Pictured: SSG Garcia and SFC Witten.

In surprising news, 1LT Perrone has progressed to the next step by making the latest Captains promotion list. Congratulations!!

We have now pumped over 600,000 gallons of fuel in support of the Combat Aviation Brigade's mission. We have also issued and received over 80 short tons of ammunition in support of the aircraft in the battalion.

Maintenance Platoon continues to adapt to its new multi-level repair requirements by incorporating new communication and Night Vision repair capabilities with our sister unit at 404th Aviation Support Battalion. Services on ground equipment continue on some of the ageing equipment that we inherited.

Soldiers have received improved armor and equipment to enhance our war fighting capability and protection.

The Roughriders are working hard to defend our great Nation and help bring peace to the Middle East. Thank all of you for your continuous support and prayers.

Roughrider 6, out!

HHC "Stallions"

Stallion Family and Friends,

As you probably already expected, your HHC Stallions are still fully engaged with the mission at hand. The company is doing an outstanding job keeping their heads in the game. Each Soldier is tested on a daily basis whether it is physically, mentally or emotionally. And they all have responded exceptionally well to the challenges. This is a direct reflection of the love and support that we receive from the home front. The Family Readiness Group is doing a terrific job keeping the Stallion families and friends abreast of the current situation. The FRG ensured that the Soldiers were not forgotten during Valentine's Day. Each Soldier received a bag of candy with sentiments from home. And the new HHC "Stallions Attack" T-shirt has been a big morale booster. Not to mention the numerous packages from caring people all over the United States. Mere words can not thank you enough for what you do for this unit.

SPC Dixon with the Valentine's gift bags sent by the HHC FRG. Thanks to our families and friends for all the care packages sent this Valentine's Day!



Many of you may have noticed by now that Sterling the Stallion has undergone a drastic transformation over the last two months. Legend has it that Sterling was eager to execute the mission that he and the Soldiers have all been training for since March 2004. Sterling started his transformation with a rigorous tactical road march from Kuwait to Camp Taji. The nearly 1000 mile trip was grueling, but well worth the effort. Days later Sterling was spotted on the flight line curling hell fire missiles and juggling 2.75" rockets.

At sunrise, Sterling will be seen sprinting from the sleeping quarters to Average Joe's gym where he pumps iron for two hours each morning in preparation for the challenging tasks he and the Soldiers accomplish daily. Additionally, Sterling has also been spotted modeling for the new HHC T-shirt. His chiseled physique and massive biceps epitomize the hard

work of the Soldiers of HHC. His transformation has been a motivating factor for all of us. His dedication to the mission and the Soldiers is displayed each evening as he stands guard over the unit in anticipation our next mission.



SPC Craig Bemis

On January 16, 2006, 1-4 Aviation conducted the Soldier of The Month Board here at Camp Taji, Iraq. The board consists of the 1SGs of the battalion asking Soldiers questions on various subjects. The board is used to determine a young Soldier's military knowledge of regulations, policies and procedures. Yes, the first Soldier of the Month for the battalion in 2006 is a Stallion. Another young promising 15P has lead the way for our young Soldiers. SPC(P) Bemis just recently completed his promotion board and will be Sergeant Bemis in the near future. SPC(P) Craig A. Bemis is from Irving, Texas and has been serving in the military for the last three years. SPC(P) Bemis joined 1-4 Aviation during OIF 1 and has been a stellar performer. He misses his lovely wife Holly and five year old daughter Hailey. However, he will see them soon during his environmental morale leave this month. Congratulations to the friends and family of SPC(P) Bemis in there tireless effort and support of this outstanding Soldier.

On 27 January 2006, Irena Cechir was promoted to Specialist in a ceremony that took place in the Troop Medical Center





HHC "Stallions" (cont'd)

on Camp Taji Airfield. Originally SPC Cechir is from Moldova, Russia and joined the Army in June of 2004. She joined the military in Oak Lawn, Illinois as a medic and now has 1 and 1/2 years in military service. She is a capable and dependable Soldier that will excel in her current grade. SPC Cechir is married to PFC Matthew Pooley, who is currently deployed with 1-22 Infantry and is also as a combat medic. The couple will be married for one year in June. They are looking forward to their environmental leave and want to celebrate together.

Corey D. Kingman was promoted to Private First Class on 1 February 2006 on Camp Taji, Iraq. He is originally from Litchfield, Connecticut. PFC Kingman is full of youthful energy and enthusiasm. He performs at a level above his current rank and is a true asset to the unit. PFC Kingman attended basic training at Ft. Leonardwood, Missouri in February 2005. He is also a graduate of Advanced Individual Training from Ft. Huachuca, Arizona.

Special Thanks to Ms. Munoz's 6th Grade Class

In early February, the Soldiers of the 1-4 ARB Commo Shop received a care package through the non-profit organization "Anysoldier.com". Little did we realize the impact this care package was about to have. The package was filled with goodies and Valentine's Day cards from an inner city 6th grade class in Phoenix, Arizona. The homemade cards were filled with warm wishes for our safety and thankfulness for our service to our country. The children reminded each one of us of how much we are appreciated by all of the supporters back in the states. Comments like "You're risking your life to save ours...that is the strongest thing anybody could ever do" and "It's really great knowing that there are still people out there that care for us" truly struck a cord in the hearts of everyone who read the

warm wishes of Ms. Willie Munoz's 6th grade class.

Without hesitation SFC Brathwaite and his Soldiers decided that they wanted to do something to give back to this class. After a little brainstorming, the Soldiers recommended that we send each child a special gift of thanks in addition to writing the class with updates about all of us. However, after hearing about the hardships these children face, the Commo Soldiers decided to share the story of these 6th graders with the Soldiers of HHC. Donations were made to send each child a special gift and to provide Ms. Munoz with a gift of gratitude to host a party for the class.

Ms. Munoz's 6th grade class may not realize it today, but they are the true heroes....they are our future! Thank you so much for your continued prayers and support!

CPT Byron C. Needum, Stallion 06

HHC Valentine's Day Messages

*Jovana,
You and the girls are my whole world. I miss you all and wish you the best V-Day that you can have. Djenne, Nadia and Isabella be sure to give mommy a big hug for me today. Hugs and Kisses Daddy*

*HHC FRG,
Happy Valentine's Day and Thank You for the candy. The Stallions*

*Carina,
Thank you for being my Special Valentine baby. Know that you are truly appreciated and sorely missed. Hopefully we will be able to spend the next one together. Love Big Daddy*

Happy Valentines Day to my family, friends & loved ones! Love you and Miss you loads xoxoxo CPT Hanson



SPC Ceja, PFC Danny, and SPC Butler were excited to receive the bags of Valentine's candy from the FRG.

I Love you Betty Hines. Jason

Happy Valentine's Day, I love you Ernest II & III, my Georgia family and Virginia family. SSG Washington, Aundreal

*LOVE TO MY FAMILY BACK HOME.
Mom, Dad, Snis, John, Hazel, Mom Celis, The Wernicks (Grammie & Grandpa), Jeni, Chilo, Mel & all the kids. Love Alison & Kurt*

Happy Valentine's Day to the Sidwell and Shouse Families back home, and to my wonderful husband, Kyle. I love you guys! Lisa

Happy Valentine's Day to my wife and my wonderful children Vincent, Sierra and Skyler...I love you and miss you so much. I am thinking of you everyday. Vince

Happy Valentine's Day to my family and my wonderful fiancée Jill. I miss all of you and love you very much, Love Nick

February Birthdays

SFC Bailey, CPT Biga, SPC Burkhalter, PFC Chiodo, Claridad, CW2 Crawford, PFC Gaide, CPL Guffey, SSG Harrison, SGT Hernandez, SPC Ludwig, SFC Marker, CPL Mayle, SGT Mims, SPC Muchunu, CW2 Niemi, SFC Omari, PFC Palma, SGT Rhodes, CW2 Riddle, 2LT Rosario, PFC Seaberry, SPC Schmitz, SPC Sneed, 1LT Speegle

February Anniversaries

The Abrazaldos, The Bahams, The Baises, The Basses, The Cristaleses, The Ferrufinos, The Friends, The Hougaboos, The Niemis, The Omaris, The Perriers, The Pflegers, The Rhodes, The Salbers, The Vasquezes, The Wittens, The Zavalas

1-4 Aviation Reenlistment Roll-up

Number of Soldiers who have re-enlisted since the start of deployment: 53

Percentage of Soldiers re-enlisted: 16%

Total dollars awarded in bonuses (as of 25FEB06): over \$697,519.00

Our Re-enlistment NCO, SGT Brad Welch, has been working hard to keep good Soldiers in the Army, and to keep 1-4 Aviation leading the way with our large number of re-enlistments. Congratulations to all the following Soldiers who have re-enlisted since the beginning of this deployment:

A Company: SPC Bender and SSG Smith

B Company: SPC Bennett and SPC Henning

C Company: SGT Ross and CPL Serna

D Company: SGT Bahe, SPC Gonzalez, SGT Hernandez, SGT Klawiter, SGT Leafy, SGT Mathes, SGT Miller, SPC Reyes, SSG Ridgeway, SFC Rodriguez, SPC Rodriguez, SPC Rodriguez, SPC Schmitz, SSG Thompson, SGT Whitaker, SSG Wongkritwit, SPC Wongsing

E Company: SPC Ambelas, SGT Areveloalle, SPC Beck, SGT Bozenske, PFC Casteneda, SGT Chavez, SSG Dawson, SSG Dunham, SPC Eady, SGT Eide, PFC Gilmore, PFC Guinyard, SGT Killsfirst, SGT McKitrick, SGT Mejia-Alfaro, CPL Reeder, SPC Statz

HHC: SGT Audet, SFC Bass, SSG Bruce, SPC Dixon, SPC Duenas, SPC Fields, SPC Mason, SPC Mundo, SPC Sanders (Patterson), SGT Rivera-Torres, SGT Vassar, SGT Welch, CPL Wilson



SGT Brad Welch

Dragon Photo Corner



ISG Lambert waits with SPC Wilson and SSG Smith for the "all clear" to come out of the bunker.



ILT Shouse and CW3 Niemi, before their last flight as a crew.



SPC Antony of A Co on the flightline.



SPC Moran and PFC Casteneda conduct maintenance on a fueler.



Commo shop Soldiers SFC Brathwaite and PFC Hines.



PV2 Daily receives her combat patch from Brigade Command Sergeant Major Patton.

Dragon Photo Corner



CW2 Marceaux makes sure CPT Papaleo gets some privacy.



PV2 Caldwell and PFC Casteneda refueling an Apache.



CPL Serna of C Co gets ready to drive the John Deere "Gator."



CSM Morant and LTC Rapavi will do anything to reenlist a Soldier, including riding in a UH-60 Blackhawk.



CPT James reenlisting SGT Klawiter and SGT Leafy.



SPC Butler calculating flight hours for pilots' records.

Dragon Photo Corner



Soldiers and their sponsors waiting outside the promotion board on February 7, 2006.



HHC Soldiers SPC Lizama and SPC Bemis.



SPC Witte and SGT Kennedy driving an RC truck.



SGT Rivera-Torres outside the battalion headquarters.



The entrance to "Average Joe's" Battalion Gym.



CW2 Paul, CW2 Larabee, and CW4 Young in Kuwait.

Chaplain's Corner

There is an old Japanese Proverb which states, "None of us is as smart as all of us." How true it is. Although individually we value self-sufficiency and personal achievements, our personal abilities can never compensate for our combined strength and potential when we labor together. In everything we commit to accomplish this year, our strength lies in our unity.

Due to our extended work hours, occasional adverse weather conditions, and the pace of our battle focused environment, at times it is difficult to appreciate the diversity of our team and each section's contributions to the success of this mission. However, each lug nut, Jesus nut (retainer ring), or each 'nut' paper pushing is vital to our organizational goal of providing firepower to our ground forces running through the streets of Baghdad. Pilots need maintenance, shops, and armament to maintain safe aircraft, just as the line companies need Echo Company to maintain the Polaris and provide fuel. We all need the S1 in HHC to ensure our pay is correct, while the Battalion TOC staff maintains flight coordination and updated mission information. Each section is vital, even that exorbitantly kind Chaplain making his "sanity maintenance" rounds.

The Bible echoes a similar message in the Book of Ecclesiastes as it states, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: if one falls down, his friend can help him up!" Companionship is a force multiplier in both the joyful and painful moments. My exhortation to each of you is to consider and respect each other's lane of expertise as vital contributions to the same mission. Sometimes this means respecting others' mission essential priorities and deadlines, while other times it may mean appreciating each other with a simple "thank you for all you do." We are in this together and together we will complete this mission with God's help carrying us through. Until we return home to our families... "Attack, Amen."

Chaplain (Captain) Regino Hernandez



**Top: CW2 Horton and SPC Hernandez in the E Company motor pool.
Bottom: SFC Lopez and PFC Edwards conducting maintenance on a vehicle.**

